



# Labubu Mania: The Ugly-Cute Toy Fueling a Global Craze

## Warm-up

1. What's the most unusual or expensive item you've ever collected or been tempted to collect? Why?
2. Why do you think certain toys or products suddenly become global trends?
3. Have you ever bought something just because it was popular online or on social media? What was it, and do you regret it?

## Vocabulary

1 Match the words with their definitions.

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Elusive → G          | A. A person who buys items to sell them again, often at a higher price   |
| 2. Frenzy → C           | B. Something that spreads quickly and widely, especially on social media |
| 3. Indulgence → E       | C. Strong excitement or wild behaviour, often seen in groups             |
| 4. Reseller → A         | D. Easy to reach or afford for most people                               |
| 5. Accessible → D       | E. A temporary comfort or pleasure that people allow themselves          |
| 6. Viral → B            | F. Surrounded or overcrowded by a large number of people                 |
| 7. Emotional relief → H | G. Difficult to find, catch, or define clearly                           |
| 8. Sceptic → I          | H. A feeling of comfort or release from stress                           |
| 9. Mobbed → F           | I. Someone who doubts or questions the truth or value of something       |
| 10. In the loop → J     | J. Being informed and up-to-date about something                         |

2 Create a short story using the pictures below and the vocabulary (pictures below).



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## Reading

It has **1. bat**-like ears, a mischievous grin full of sharp **2. teeth**, and a face that looks both creepy and endearing, and it's driving people **3. wild**. Meet Labubu, a designer toy by Hong Kong's Pop Mart that has taken the world by storm.

Labubu **4. belongs** to a collectible series called The Monsters, and while it's been around for a while, its sudden rise to global fame in 2024 is thanks to one powerful force: **5. social media**. TikTok and Instagram were soon flooded with viral videos of Labubu dolls dancing, lip-syncing, or embarking on absurd adventures. The internet couldn't get **6. enough**.

What followed was a **7. frenzy**. Pop Mart stores were mobbed, with fans queuing for hours and sometimes days. Some travelled long distances, crossing countries just to get their **8. hands** on the elusive toy. Resellers joined the party too, listing dolls for sky-high prices.

But what makes people so **9. obsessed** with this quirky creature? Psychologists suggest that Labubu offers a kind of "emotional relief" in difficult times. In a world shaken by **10. inflation** and economic uncertainty, small indulgences, like an odd-looking toy, provide **11. comfort**. Unlike luxury goods, Labubu feels **12. accessible** (at least before resellers hike up prices). It's also a way to participate in a collective **13. trend**, especially appealing to younger generations who spend much of their lives online.

Yet, some are beginning to raise **14. eyebrows**. Is this really about the toy or about the thrill of buying, collecting, and being "in the **15. loop**"? Critics argue that the Labubu craze reflects a deeper issue: the power of viral culture to spark unnecessary **16. spending**. In an era when many struggle to **17. afford** essentials, dropping hundreds on a 10-centimetre plastic figure feels... questionable. Still, the tone of criticism is often **18. lighthearted**. Even sceptics admit Labubu is "kind of adorable in a weird way." For many, it's just another chapter in the long history of **19. bizarre** trends, from Beanie Babies to fidget spinners.



Whether Labubu becomes a lasting icon or fades like many viral fads remains to be **20. seen**. But for now, this toothy little monster has captured the hearts and wallets of people around the world.

## True or False

Are the sentences true or false?

1. Labubu's popularity started in 2020 due to global toy fairs.
2. The toy is part of a collection called The Monsters.
3. Social media platforms like TikTok helped make Labubu famous.
4. Fans often wait for a few minutes to get the toy in stores.
5. Some people travel to different countries to find Labubu.
6. Labubu is seen as a luxurious, exclusive item like designer handbags.
7. The toy gives emotional comfort during tough economic times.
8. Critics say the craze might reflect impulsive spending habits.
9. Most critics believe Labubu is dangerous for young children.
10. The article suggests that Labubu's popularity may eventually fade.

1. False
2. True
3. True
4. False
5. True
6. False
7. True
8. True
9. False
10. True

